

March 2007

Dear 2nd District Friends:

We've reached the half-way point of the 105-day 2007 session of the Legislature. We've accomplished a great deal in the early days, but we've got a lot to do before we adjourn on April 22.

This newsletter will outline for you some of the issues I'm focusing on this session as we work through the agenda.

My priority issues this session include: Requiring state hospitals to face their responsibility to their patients by reducing deadly Hospital-Acquired infections; Legislation to crack down on negligent or criminal acts by health care providers; Continue my work to deal with the ravages of Methamphetamine; and dealing with a variety of issues related to environmental health.

This session I was given a new responsibility to serve as Chairman of the House Select Committee on Environmental Health. I am also a member of the Health Care & Wellness Committee, Transportation Committee and the Joint Select Committee on Military & Veteran's Affairs.

I hope you will feel free to contact me throughout this session or anytime, by calling my Olympia office at (360) 786-7912 or through my e-mail address [campbell.tom@leg.wa.gov](mailto:campbell.tom@leg.wa.gov). I am privileged to serve the people of the 2nd District in the Washington State House of Representatives.

Sincerely,



Representative Tom Campbell

## State Representative **Tom Campbell** 2nd Legislative District

*Serving the citizens of Graham, Spanaway, Roy, McKenna, Eatonville,  
Orting, Puyallup's South Hill, Yelm, Rainier, Elbe and Ashford.*



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# 2007 MID-SESSION REPORT

State Representative  
**TOM CAMPBELL**

P.O. Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

TOWN HALL  
MEETINGS!

Saturday, March 17  
& Saturday, March 24, 2007

See front cover for details

## State Representative **TOM CAMPBELL**



### 2nd Legislative District



# 2007 MID-SESSION REPORT

Mark your  
calendar:

## TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Saturday – March 17  
and Saturday –  
March 24, 2007

**Saturday, March 17**

**Eatonville** 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Eatonville Library  
205 Center Street W  
306-832-6011

**Orting** 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Orting Multi-Purpose Center  
202 Washington Ave. S

**Saturday, March 24**

**Yelm** 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Yelm City Hall  
105 Yelm Ave. W

**Spanaway** 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Bethel High School Auditorium  
22215 38th Ave. E

## ■ Campbell named Chairman of Select Committee on Environmental Health

This year, the House leadership selected me to serve as Chairman of the House Select Committee on Environmental Health. It was a bold move by House Speaker Chopp and the Democratic Caucus to name a Republican to this post. I believe it reflects the fact that environmental health is not a partisan issue, as well as their confidence that I will be a strong leader for the environment. I've always held that, as a legislator, we need to work together to involve all who are seeking to improve our quality of life across Washington.

An editorial in *the Vancouver Columbian* commended Democrats, who expanded their majority in the House to 62-36, saying "in a highly unusual gesture, the Democrats gave a committee chairmanship...to, of all people, (a) Republican. Republican Rep. Tom Campbell, of Roy in rural Pierce County, was picked to head a new Select Committee on Environmental Health.

"Campbell...has a reputation for moderation and working with Democrats," the article said. "This is just one example of bipartisanship in the Legislature, where such cooperation is often discouraged on major bills by party leaders," the editorial added.

We're working on a myriad of environmental health issues in my committee, including air and water quality, pesticides, and cancer-causing elements in the environment. We will have great discretion for issues that will come before the committee.

The first major issue on our agenda is legislation to phase out the use of toxic flame retardants in products used in the manufacture of some electronics, mattresses, floor coverings and drapes (HB 1024). Some of these products are very dangerous, especially for kids. It passed the House 71-24 and now goes to the Senate.

We're also considering bills dealing with wood smoke emissions (HB 2261) and the hazardous lead in wheel weights (HB 2143).

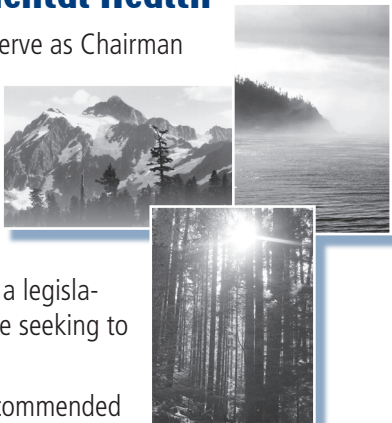
## ■ Campbell takes lead with health care provider bill

Very early this session, we took a major first step to establish a process to deal with negligent health care professionals who have shown a flagrant disregard for the safety and well-being of patients who have entrusted them with their care.

The House Health Care and Wellness Committee passed my legislation (House Bill 1103) to require background checks of out-of-state practitioners seeking to be licensed in Washington, and other disciplinary sanctions on errant health care providers. Soon, it will come up for final passage by the House.

My bill would require the state Dept. of Health to review criminal records and check for arrests and convictions of licensed professionals. It also would require hospitals and other health care facilities to report unprofessional conduct of providers.

This bill really opens up lines of communication between the health care consumer and the health care professionals. There are many honorable providers who take their professional responsibility very seriously. But there are also 'bad apples' — licensed by the state — who are guilty of unprofessional conduct in dealing with their patients.



## ■ Hospital-Acquired infections bill introduced

Each year, two million Americans who stay in a hospital are exposed to a variety of infections because of the hospital environment. Sadly, this results in death for 90,000 patients, while costing the health care system \$4.5 billion. Hospital infection is the eighth leading cause of death in our nation. Yet, our hospitals have very little responsibility to let the public know about these occurrences.

House Bill 1106, which I again introduced this session, will require all health care facilities in Washington State to report hospital-acquired infections, and it will require the Dept. of Health to publish comparisons of hospital infection rates. That will go a long way to alert the public about the concerns and the potential for hospital-acquired infections. It will also make hospitals realize their responsibility to their patients.

In a recent editorial (Feb. 2, 2007) The Olympian wrote: "Let's hope the third time is a charm for Rep. Tom Campbell's bill to require hospitals to report how many of their patients come down with an infection during treatment.

"The public has every right to know which hospitals have aggressive infection-control programs in place and which hospitals, for whatever reasons, have high infection rates," the editorial stated.

Last session, I introduced a similar bill that passed the House with bi-partisan support by a 59-39 vote. But when it reached the Senate, unfortunately, it was amended to a worthless study! This session, we should be able to find strong support in both the House and Senate to get this measure to the Governor's desk for her signature.



## ■ Tax exemption for disabled veterans moving through House

The House has passed (House Bill 1102) to extend a property tax relief, now enjoyed by our senior citizens, to veterans with 100-percent service-connected disability. It now goes to the Senate.



The federal IRS code does not consider benefits disabled veterans receive to be income. But, our state does, and continues to require disabled veterans disability-connected federal payments as part of their income, often putting low-income veterans above the threshold for a property tax exemption.

My bill seeks to extend property tax exemptions to citizens who were injured in defense of our country. We heard testimony in the House Finance Committee from several disabled veterans who are being forced out of their homes because of increasing taxes.

One veteran, Patrick of Gig Harbor, testified that he bought his home in 1959 for \$155,000. But, today the house is valued by the county auditor at about \$400,000. The tax amount will force him out of his home because of his low income.

We're finding that many of these disabled veterans have to go to nursing homes because they are being taxed out of their own homes. State-wide, there are fewer than 1,200 disabled veterans who qualify.

This legislation will raise the bar on the combined disposable income for eligibility for 100-percent service-connected-disability to \$70,000. And will also clarify in state law that the 'disability income' from the federal government will no longer be considered as income for those who qualify.

# State Representative TOM CAMPBELL

## 2007 MID-SESSION REPORT

## ■ Earlier primary election date will mean greater accuracy

Washington's primary elections in September have long been the latest in the nation. Some states hold primaries as early as March. But, that will change in the next election.

In the 2008, our primary election for President, Congress, and all state elected officials will be moved back from the first Tuesday in September to the **third Tuesday in August**. So we will go to the polls on **August 18**, rather than Sept. 2.

Close elections, recounts, and slow absentee ballot returns have been a major concern to election officials facing weeks of lead time for preparing the November ballot. This change provides a more realistic time to assure proper and accurate ballot counts.



## Youth Resource Center Ground-breaking –

Helen Myrick, President of the Youth resources board, Rep. Tom Campbell, Pierce County Councilwoman Barbra Gelman and Lyle Quasim, Pierce County Social Services director, break ground for the Youth Resource Center for homeless youth in the Spanaway-Parkland Area. Campbell, who served as master of ceremonies for the ground-breaking event last summer, had obtained \$400,000 in the State Capitol Budget for the center.



## ■ Orting Public Safety Building construction underway

Last month, construction was begun on the new 'state-of-the art Orting Public Safety Building. The facility will house the Orting Fire and Police Departments.

I'm pleased to say, we were able to appropriate \$250,000 in the state budget to get this project rolling. Construction is expected to be completed by October, 2007. With the state grant of \$250,000, the city has now raised more than \$2 million for the project.

The old Orting fire department, built 60 years ago, had long passed its ability to contain modern firefighting facilities for this town. This new facility will provide Orting the fire and police protection it deserves. Meanwhile, Orting, with 4,800 residents, continues to grow. The 4,800 population is more than doubled in the last 15 years.